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Item 3(g) of the provisional agenda*
Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: social development

Road map for the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific

Note by the secretariat

Summary

Further to Commission resolution 69/13 of 1 May 2013 on implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the present document contains proposals for a road map that highlights overarching actions that need to be taken so as to set in motion the timely implementation of the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

The Incheon Strategy was adopted by the members and associate members of ESCAP assembled at the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, which was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 29 October to 2 November 2012; it was subsequently endorsed by the Commission through its resolution 69/13.

Action at three different levels is identified in the road map, namely: regional; subregional; and national. The key actors for each level of action in the road map are listed below. It is hoped that representation in decision-making bodies will be at a high level, with a focus on fostering cooperation and making resources available for advancing implementation.

The various actors involved are as follows:

(a) At the national level: ESCAP members and associate members, with the support of civil society organizations and other partners, as appropriate;

(b) At the subregional level: subregional intergovernmental entities and organizations, as appropriate;

(c) At the regional level: the ESCAP secretariat, in cooperation with partners, as appropriate.

The overriding principle for all road map action is results-focused strategic partnerships with diverse entities that have the technical competence, mandate and resources to contribute to implementation of the Incheon Strategy.

* E/ESCAP/70/L.1/Rev.1.

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The time frame for the present road map is five years, covering the period from 2013 to 2017, which coincides with the mid-term review of the Incheon Strategy.

In addition to the actions in the road map, ESCAP members and associate members have committed to implementing each of the 10 goals and corresponding targets in the Incheon Strategy.

The 10 goals of the Incheon Strategy are:

Goal 1: Reduce poverty and enhance work and employment prospects;

Goal 2: Promote participation in political processes and in decision-making;

Goal 3: Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication;

Goal 4: Strengthen social protection;

Goal 5: Expand early intervention and education of children with disabilities;

Goal 6: Ensure gender equality and women's empowerment;

Goal 7: Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management;

Goal 8: Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data;

Goal 9: Accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the harmonization of national legislation with the Convention;

Goal 10: Advance subregional, regional and interregional cooperation.

The initial draft road map was submitted for review to the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, which was established by the Commission in its decision 69/4. The first session of the Working Group was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 25 and 26 February 2014, with the following member States in attendance: Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; Mongolia; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

The road map reflects the views of the Working Group and is submitted to the Commission for its consideration and endorsement, in pursuance of Commission resolution 69/13.

National action

2013-2014

1. Designate a national focal point entity to coordinate implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
2. Translate the Incheon Strategy into the national language(s).
3. Convert the text of the Incheon Strategy into accessible formats.
4. Disseminate the Incheon Strategy in the public domain.
5. Enhance awareness of the Incheon Strategy across ministries.
6. Demonstrate high-level commitment to implementation of the Incheon Strategy through issuance of government directives at a high political level.
7. Hold a national event to launch the Incheon Strategy.
8. Initiate or continue the national Make the Right Real campaign to promote ratification/implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
9. Include issues concerning women and girls with disabilities in the national response to the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] and the regional outcome document.
10. Engage Champions and Promoters in action to promote the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, as appropriate.

2015

1. Set up a high-level interministerial committee to advance implementation of the Incheon Strategy, including through resource allocations.
2. Establish subnational mechanisms for implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
3. Hold consultations between the Government and civil society organizations on action plans (national and subnational) to implement the Incheon Strategy.
4. Launch and implement a national action plan for implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
5. Launch and implement a national action plan to produce data on Incheon Strategy indicators, so as to track its implementation.
6. Submit data to update the country profile in the forthcoming *Disability at a Glance 2015*, which will be published by ESCAP.
7. Include issues concerning women and girls with disabilities in a national response to the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, its global outcome documents and follow-up.
8. Engage Champions and Promoters in action to promote the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, as appropriate.

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

2016

1. Undertake preparations for collecting baseline data on Incheon Strategy indicators.
2. Initiate a mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
3. Hold subnational consultations on implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
4. Engage civil society organizations in the national mid-term review process.
5. Prepare a response to the ESCAP survey on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
6. Consider the leadership and composition of the delegation at the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
7. Include women and girls with disabilities in the national follow-up to the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the various regional and global outcome documents.
8. Engage Champions and Promoters in action to promote the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, as appropriate.

2017

1. Submit (within the first quarter of 2017) a response to the ESCAP survey on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy, including baseline data on Incheon Strategy indicators.
2. Ensure high-level participation at the intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
3. Attend preparatory regional consultations, followed by the senior officials and ministerial segments of the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
4. Identify and document good practices in implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
5. Review the outcome of the mid-term review.
6. Prepare a national action plan for implementation of the Incheon Strategy for the period 2018-2022, taking into consideration the lessons learned between 2013 and 2017.
7. Include women and girls with disabilities in the national follow-up to the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the various regional and global outcome documents.
8. Engage Champions and Promoters in action to promote the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, as appropriate.

Subregional action

2013-2014

1. Promote subregional cooperation in supporting implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
2. Include in the meeting agendas and programmes of the respective subregional intergovernmental bodies specific measures to support implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022,[2] and the Incheon Strategy.

[2] Resolution 69/13, annex.

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2015

1. Convene subregional multi-stakeholder forums to strengthen the subregional dimension of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
2. Hold subregional workshops in the respective subregions on tracking implementation of the Incheon Strategy, in partnership with the Disability Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Central Asian Disability Forum, the Pacific Disability Forum and the South Asian Disability Forum.
3. Reinforce disability inclusion in the programmes and projects of the secretariats of the respective subregional intergovernmental bodies, as appropriate.

2016

1. Prepare a response to the ESCAP survey on the 2017 mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy, particularly as regards Goal 10.

2017

1. Submit a response to the ESCAP survey on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
2. Attend a high-level intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
3. Organize a side event on subregional cooperation on the Incheon Strategy during the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.

Regional action

2013

1. Adopt Commission resolution 69/13.
2. Establish the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.
3. Submit the Incheon Strategy to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development.
4. Initiate implementation of the ESCAP-Sasakawa Award for Disability-Inclusive Business in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Convene the first meeting of Champions and Promoters for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, in New York on 23 September 2013.
6. Convene an expert group meeting on Incheon Strategy indicators.
7. Facilitate the establishment, by the Republic of Korea, of the Make the Right Real Fund.
8. Organize a regional preparatory meeting, in cooperation with the Government of Thailand, and submit its outcome document on disability-inclusion and the development goals beyond 2015 to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development.

2014

1. Convene the first session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.[3]
2. Report to the Commission at its seventieth session on the implementation of Commission resolutions 67/6 and 69/13.
3. Launch the ESCAP Multi-donor Trust Fund for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.
4. Disseminate the Incheon Strategy and the road map to entities at the national, subregional and regional levels.
5. Advocate for disability mainstreaming in the framework on disaster risk reduction beyond 2015.[4]
6. Mainstream disability in the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the ESCAP region.
7. Advocate for disability inclusion in the sustainable development goals beyond 2015.
8. Implement ESCAP capacity-building projects, with support from partners, on:
   (a) Goal 3: Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication;
   (b) Goal 7: Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management;
   (c) Goal 8: Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data.
9. Develop and disseminate a guidebook on Incheon Strategy indicators.
10. Finalize and disseminate a user-friendly version of the Incheon Strategy in English.
11. Initiate a regional survey to gather data updates for *Disability at a Glance 2015*.
12. Initiate the development of the disability module of the ESCAP Social Protection Toolbox.

2015

1. Convene the second session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.
2. Highlight the engagement of women with disabilities in the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
3. Prepare and launch the 2015 edition of the annual ESCAP publication *Disability at a Glance*.
4. Continue implementation of ESCAP capacity-building projects on:
   (a) Goal 3: Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication;
   (b) Goal 7: Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management;
   (c) Goal 8: Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data.
5. Launch an ESCAP publication on private sector disability-inclusive business initiatives.

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[3] The first session was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea and held at the ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia at Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 25 and 26 February 2014.

[4] To be agreed upon at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015. At present it is referred to as the "Hyogo Framework for Action 2": a successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

2016

1. Convene the third session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.
2. Report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
3. Undertake a baseline survey to track implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
4. Strengthen inter-subregional partnerships on:
   (a) Goal 3: Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication;
   (b) Goal 7: Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management;
   (c) Goal 8: Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data;
   (d) Goal 10: Advance subregional, regional and interregional cooperation.
5. Initiate preparations for the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.
6. Launch the disability module of the ESCAP Social Protection Toolbox.
7. Ensure the inclusion of women with disabilities in the follow-up to the outcomes of the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

2017

1. Convene the fourth session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.
2. Analyse baseline data on Incheon Strategy indicators.
3. Convene a stakeholder consultation.
4. Prepare the mid-term review documents of the Working Group on implementation of the Incheon Strategy as regards progress and gaps.
5. Convene a high-level intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy, and consider a consensus document on accelerating such implementation.
6. Follow up on ESCAP capacity-building projects on:
   (a) Goal 3: Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication;
   (b) Goal 7: Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management;
   (c) Goal 8: Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data.
7. Continue action to include women with disabilities in the follow-up to the outcomes of the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
8. Follow up on the outcomes of the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the mid-term review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy.

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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Item 3(h) of the provisional agenda*
Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: statistics

Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its ninth session**

Summary

At its ninth session, the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) commended the Institute for attaining the key results set out in its programme of work for the period 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2013. Through 17 courses/workshops, 440 government statisticians and officials of planning, health, agriculture and labour ministries of 44 countries and their respective institutions improved the quality of statistical outputs and increased their use for development planning, policy formulation and the monitoring of progress in development goals. The Council noted that by end of 2013, about 390 participants would be trained in 11 more courses. It also noted the high relevance of the focus on positioning statistics as a development imperative of the eleventh Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Chiba, Japan, on 21 and 22 November 2013 and its contribution to the global discussions on the development agenda beyond 2015.

Noting the expected increased demand for statistics in monitoring the development agenda beyond 2015, the Council advised SIAP to consider expanding its training activities to cover new topics related to, among other things, governance, big data and sustainable development.

The Council expressed appreciation for the successful deployment of more SIAP e-learning courses and the Institute's use of blended learning in some training courses. It recommended that SIAP accelerate further the delivery of online training and continue to work on creating a collaborative open online course platform for developing and delivering online statistical training with a range of partnerships.

The Governing Council endorsed the work and financial plan of SIAP for 2014. The plan includes the following: (a) design, coordination and delivery of at least 25 training courses on a range of areas at basic and advanced levels; (b) two management forums; (c) training development and coordination activities; and (d) formulation of the 2015-2019 strategic plan. The Council appreciated the role of SIAP as the Asia-Pacific training coordinator of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics. It also stressed the critical role of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific in addressing training gaps.

* E/ESCAP/70/L.1/Rev.1.

** The late submission of the present document is due to the need to incorporate views and comments from Governing Council members in finalizing the report.

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The Council acknowledged with deep appreciation the high level of support to SIAP by the host Government (Japan) through cash and in-kind contributions, despite the difficult financial climate, and expressed the crucial importance of maintaining such support. It stressed the key role of SIAP in meeting anticipated training needs centred on new statistical data and measurements for the development agenda beyond 2015, as well as in the production of basic statistics. It also urged member States to increase their cash contributions to SIAP and development partners to expand their technical cooperation activities in training in the region.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Recommendations and decisions

1. Programme of work and training strategies

1. The Governing Council commends SIAP for its outstanding accomplishments and results in the reporting period and its progress in achieving its programme of work for 2013, especially in the light of the challenges posed by a decrease in the number of its core professional staff during the period, and expresses appreciation for its efforts in managing and administering its resources efficiently.

2. The Council stresses the importance of expanding the delivery of Internet-based e-learning by enlarging the scope of topics, increasing the number of course offerings and training more participants, and recommends that SIAP further strengthen its capacity to offer e-learning courses. It also recommends that the Institute pursue an initiative aimed at creating a collaborative open online course platform that engages partner training institutes, academia and statistics development partners in developing and delivering statistical training.

3. Noting the call for a data revolution and the expected increased demand for statistics in monitoring the development agenda beyond 2015, the Governing Council advises SIAP to further investigate the appropriateness and possibility of expanding its training activities to cover topics related to, among other things, big data and sustainable development.

4. The Governing Council recognizes the efforts made by SIAP in improving measurements of the impact of its training programmes, and recommends that the Institute further study and identify methods for better evaluation of the effectiveness of its e-learning courses.

5. In measuring the impact of statistical training, the Council notes the importance of involving organizations of training participants, and recommends that SIAP collaborate with these organizations in developing and instituting the evaluation framework for measuring the impact of its training programmes.

6. The Council recognizes the importance of tapping expertise in national statistical systems in making available knowledge and experiences to training participants, and recommends that SIAP step up its efforts in deploying a system for certifying trainers and institutions that provide statistical training. It also encourages expanding South-South cooperation for developing statistical capacity in the region.

7. The Council appreciates the importance of research-based training, especially in carrying out methodological research that can be applied by statistical offices. Noting that the research-based training programme of SIAP has been suspended due to cost-effectiveness concerns, the Council recommends that SIAP redesign its research-based training programme and consider modalities that would increase the quality of its outputs, such as better screening of applications for participation.

8. The Council recognizes the continued need to train staff of relatively developed statistical systems, and recommends that SIAP extend invitations

to its training courses to those member States in order to open up opportunities to participate in the courses on a self-funded basis.

2. Financial status and resource mobilization

9. To facilitate efforts to assess the financial status of the Institute, the Council recommends that SIAP provide a financial report that includes not just cash flows, but contains additional information, such as assets and liabilities.

10. Noting the need to increase the core staff of SIAP in the light of its decreased numbers over the past three years due to resource constraints and increased workload and to ensure that the Institute maintains the quality of its results, the Council recommends that SIAP explore sustainable options for doing so within the available institutional resources.

11. The Governing Council reiterates its recommendations for increasing contributions to SIAP and decides to issue a letter to member States prior to the seventieth session of the Commission conveying the decision at the eighth session to recommend a minimum annual cash contribution of $5,000 and a mandatory incremental increase of at least 5 per cent per annum.

12. As a modality to supplement SIAP resources in responding to the statistical training needs of the region, the Council recommends that SIAP expand its clientele base to include other government ministries and the private sector.

3. Work and financial plan for 2014

13. The Council recognizes that the result of the annual needs survey of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is crucial for member States to continue benefiting from the SIAP-JICA training courses. The Council urges national statistical offices (NSOs) to be actively engaged in setting national priorities for training based on the JICA survey. It further recommends that the ESCAP secretariat continue, on an annual basis, to provide SIAP with support by informing permanent representatives to ESCAP and other relevant national counterparts when the survey has been circulated to JICA national focal points.

14. To better assess the proposed work programmes in terms of meeting targets and evaluating resource gaps, the Council recommends the inclusion of the estimated number of participants in the programmes of training courses.

15. The Council expresses appreciation for the established cost-sharing arrangements between SIAP and the statistical training institutes of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, and urges other member States to collaborate with SIAP through this modality.

16. The Council endorses the programme of work and financial plan proposed by SIAP for 2014.

4. Strategic planning for the period 2015-2019

17. The Council recognizes that it is essential to finalize the 2015-2019 strategic plan by the end of July 2014, and endorses the proposed guiding structure and timeline for completion of the plan contained in the report of the Report of the Friends of the Chair on its first meeting (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/5).

18. The Council recommends that SIAP include a monitoring and evaluation plan as part of the results framework, which would serve as the basis for regular review and adjustments during implementation of the plan.

19. Given the broad experience and expertise required, the Council proposes that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council and the SIAP Director review and modify, if needed, the current composition of members of the Friends of the Chair (FOC), and decides that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council and the SIAP director will be responsible for deciding on the new composition of FOC.

5. Network for Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific

20. The Council expresses its support for the creation of the Network for Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific, in particular the designation of the Chair of the Governing Council as a member of the Network, the designation of SIAP as secretariat of the Network, and the initial focus of the activities of the Network.

21. The Council notes the importance of establishing a database of resource persons and regional technical cooperation initiatives pertaining to improving regional coordination, and expresses its support of the role of SIAP in establishing and maintaining the database.

6. Training component of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

22. The Council notes with appreciation the effective collaboration among the implementing partners of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics.

23. Given the existence of specific governance mechanisms for determining the work programme for the training component of the Regional Action Plan, the Council acknowledges that its main role is to provide advice to SIAP on the Institute's role as coordinator and in integrating the work programme of the Regional Action Plan into the programme of work of SIAP. In this regard, the Council suggests that the Regional Action Plan engage in capacity-building in the areas of fishery and forestry statistics. Furthermore, it recommends that SIAP include agriculture and rural statistics as a focus area in the 2015-2019 strategic plan.

24. Bearing in mind that a separate action plan covering countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is under development, the Council notes the importance of ensuring that all member States of ESCAP benefit from training on agricultural and rural statistics provided by SIAP.

7. Date and venue of the tenth session of the Governing Council

25. The Council decides that an interim meeting will be held in July 2014 in Chiba, Japan and that the tenth session will be held back-to-back with the fourth session of the Committee on Statistics, which is scheduled to be held in Bangkok in December 2014.

B. Acknowledgements

26. The Governing Council acknowledges with deep appreciation the contributions and highest level of support to SIAP extended by the host Government (Japan) through cash and in-kind contributions made through its

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and JICA, despite the difficult financial climate.

27. The Council also expresses appreciation to the following:

(a) Contributing members and associate members of ESCAP for their cash contributions to SIAP for 2013;

(b) The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the multi-year collaborative partnership under the ESCAP/UNFPA project on "Statistical capacity-building for undertaking the 2010 round of population and housing census integrated with gender concerns";

(c) The National Academy for Statistical Administration of India, the Statistical Research and Training Centre of the Statistical Centre of Iran, the Statistical and Research Training Center of the Philippines, the Statistical Training Institute of the Department of Statistics of Malaysia, the Statistical Training Institute of Statistics Korea, the University of Tokushima and the University of the South Pacific for hosting regional and subregional courses on a cost-sharing basis;

(d) National experts who served as resource persons and guest lecturers for SIAP courses and their respective institutions: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and other ministries, prefectural governments, educational institutions and private companies in Japan; BPS-Statistics Indonesia; Department of Statistics, Malaysia; and National Statistical Coordination Board, Philippines;

(e) Regional and international statistics development partners that collaborated with SIAP in conducting its courses: Asian Development Bank (ADB); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (China); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Viet Nam); Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNFPA; Secretariat of the Pacific Community; United Nations Statistics Division; University of the South Pacific; and World Bank.

II. Summary of proceedings

A. Matters arising from the eighth session of the Governing Council and its interim session

28. The Governing Council had before it a note by the secretariat on matters arising from the eighth session and interim session of the Governing Council (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/2). The Council noted with satisfaction the action taken and current status of the matters listed as reported by SIAP.

1. Financial status and resource mobilization

29. The Governing Council appreciated the increase in cash contributions by the Governments of Bangladesh and China in 2013. The representative of the host Government (Japan) informed the Council of its efforts to keep its contributions to SIAP at the same level as the previous year and urged members and associate members to continue their contributions to SIAP.

30. The representative of Malaysia expressed the country's intention to increase its cash contribution after 2014.

2. Programme of work and training strategies

31. The Director apprised the Council on initiatives taken by SIAP to expand delivery of Internet-based training in its training programmes. SIAP increased the number of online courses and introduced courses using a blended learning approach, such as a combination of online training and face-to-face training. The Council noted that blended learning increased the effectiveness of training as it ensured that participants had the requisite background needed for the face-to-face sessions. The representative of Japan informed the session of the country's efforts to obtain resources in the next fiscal year for improving the facilities and equipment for e-learning.

32. To develop a long-term strategy on the effective use of e-learning, SIAP organized the Fifth Workshop on Forging Partnerships in Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific: Making e-Learning Work for Us in Chiba, Japan, from 24 to 26 June 2013. The Council agreed with the recommendation of the workshop that SIAP pursue an initiative to create a collaborative open online course platform that engages partner training institutes, academia and statistics development partners in developing and delivering statistical training.

33. On improving the evaluation of the impact of training, the Council noted that SIAP undertook a thorough study and research with support of a consultant that resulted in a framework for training evaluation. Concrete measures of the results would be developed further in 2014. The representative of Australia noted the need for better evaluation of online training and members suggested further research in that area.

34. Representatives of China, Malaysia and the Russian Federation reported efforts in strengthening collaboration with SIAP. China reiterated its strong interest in collaborating with SIAP during an official visit of the Director to the China International Statistical Training in August 2013. Malaysia expressed appreciation for the successful collaboration between SIAP and its new training institute in providing the first subregional course on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) at the institute.

3. Work and financial plan for 2013

35. The Director emphasized the need for countries to prioritize statistics training courses in the JICA survey conducted in countries in order to ensure that SIAP continued to offer those foundational and basic statistical courses. The Council noted that several member States continued to experience difficulty in accessing the questionnaire, as well as timely information on the survey process. It expressed appreciation for the annual efforts of SIAP in providing information to NSOs on the survey and recommended that the ESCAP secretariat continue, on an annual basis, to support SIAP by informing permanent representatives to ESCAP and other relevant national counterparts of the survey schedule.

4. Strategic planning for the period 2015-2019

36. Acting on the request of the Director to review the composition of FOC, which was created in 2013 to assist SIAP in formulating the strategic plan, the Council suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council and the SIAP Director review and modify, if needed, the current composition of members of FOC.

5. Matters relating to the Committee on Statistics

37. The Council noted that retaining the current reporting line to the Commission whereby ESCAP regional institutions reported directly to it was endorsed by the Committee on Statistics at its third session and the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, pending the final report of an ongoing review.

B. Report of the Director of the Institute

38. The Governing Council had before it the report of the Director of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/3). The Director of SIAP highlighted key results and accomplishments, summarized the financial and administrative status and drew attention to opportunities and challenges for SIAP in the near future.

1. Key results and accomplishments

39. The Governing Council at its eighth session endorsed the 2013 SIAP programme of work and financial plan. The programme was aimed at strengthening capacity to produce, disseminate and use economic, agricultural, population, social, vital and environmental statistics, increasing awareness and knowledge on options for modernizing statistical systems, and increasing training capability on national institutions. The programme of work consisted of implementation of training programmes and courses and training resources development and coordination.

40. During the period January 2013 to September 2013, the Institute conducted 17 training courses and workshops, which were attended by 440 government statisticians and ministry officials from 44 countries; 436 of them were from ESCAP member countries. A total of 68 per cent of the attendees participated in short courses and 12 per cent in e-learning courses. By the end of the year, 11 additional courses with a projected 388 participants would have been conducted.

41. About 68 per cent of the 436 participants from ESCAP member countries in the courses came from South-East Asia, 23 per cent from South and South-West Asia and 8 per cent the Pacific. Overall, there were more female participants (241) than males (199) — reversing the trend of more male than female participants for the first time since 2010. Gender ratios (expressed as the number of females per 100 males) remained low for participants from South and South-West Asia (55) and North and Central Asia (75). The ratio for short courses increased to 144, explaining the greater overall participation of women in training courses. The gender ratios for SIAP/JICA courses (60) and management-level workshops and seminars (40) remained low, while for e-learning courses, it was 100, as compared to previous years in which female participants far outnumbered male participants.

42. Based on indicators on performance set in the results framework of the 2010-2014 strategic plan, the Council commended SIAP for achieving the targeted results.

(a) Implementation of training programmes and courses

43. The SIAP training programmes and courses covered the following: fundamentals of official statistics; population and social statistics; national accounts and economic statistics; environment statistics; and agricultural

statistics. The courses ranged from basic to advanced and general to specialized levels, targeting the different core skills levels of the participants.

44. During the reporting period, SIAP conducted a four-month and a two-month residential course, 11 short courses (regional-5, subregional-2; country-4), three e-learning courses and one workshop.

Fundamentals of official statistics

45. The Director explained that the core training courses on fundamentals of official statistics were the long-running SIAP-JICA collaboration on the residential courses under the JICA group training programmes. The courses included the following: basic statistical methods and processes; statistical frameworks, standards and classifications; and basic population, social, and economic statistics. In recent years, those courses had focused on the production and analyses of data and statistics for monitoring achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. During the reporting period, 44 participants from 24 countries completed two such courses.

Population and social statistics

46. Since 2009, SIAP and the UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office through the project "Statistical capacity-building for undertaking the 2010 round of population and housing census integrated with gender concerns" had conducted regional, subregional and country training workshops in order to increase the use of census data for development planning and policymaking. As of 30 September 2013, about 350 statisticians, planning officials and policymakers had received training. The Director informed the session that the project would end in 2013, with the final workshop to be held in December.

47. SIAP collaborated with the United Nations Statistics Division on a regional workshop that trained 21 officials from 14 countries in improving the integration of a gender perspective into official statistics based on the new Gender Statistics Manual.[1] The Manual furnished methodological and analytical information necessary to improve the availability, quality and use of gender statistics in countries with less developed statistical systems.

48. The Commission in its resolution 69/15 supported a regional strategic plan for improving civil registration and vital statistics. In line with that priority, SIAP initiated an annual series of regional workshops on production and use of vital statistics in 2012. The Director informed the session that a second workshop would be organized in December 2013.

National accounts and economic statistics

49. To assist countries in implementing the System of National Accounts, 2008 (2008 SNA), SIAP continued to offer a series of regional training courses at basic and advanced levels through both e-learning (3 by end 2013) and on-site modalities (2 by end 2013).

50. SIAP noted that despite the high demand for the e-learning courses on 2008 SNA, it had needed to limit the number of participants per course due to lecturer load. On average, 45 participants per e-learning course completed two courses during the reporting period. Although the courses were delivered

[1] United Nations Statistics Division, "Gender statistics manual: integrating a gender perspective into statistics".

in asynchronous mode, lecturers fielded questions and provided feedback on assignments to participants on a timely basis. The Council noted the importance of e-learning as a modality for increasing participation in the courses and encouraged SIAP to engage experts of national statistical systems in the delivery of the courses.

Environment statistics

51. In collaboration with the Statistics Division and the Environment and Development Division of ESCAP, SIAP continued to provide basic training on environment statistics to participants of the residential courses through a blended-learning approach. In response to a request of the Government of Malaysia for training on SEEA, the Institute and the Statistical Training Institute of Malaysia with support from the Statistics Division of ESCAP and the United Nations Statistics Division conducted the first subregional course on the topic. The Government of Malaysia expressed appreciation for the training and welcomed continued collaboration with SIAP in 2014.

Agricultural statistics

52. Under the training component of the Regional Action Plan, the implementing partners, ADB, FAO and SIAP, conducted two training-of-trainers regional workshops on building training resources for improving agricultural and rural statistics. Forty-nine statisticians from 15 countries completed the training. Another 15 statisticians were slated to participate in a third workshop in December 2013.

53. The Regional Action Plan supported the participation of four countries in a policy analysis workshop on food security, policy alleviation and sustainable agriculture given by the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA).

Modernizing national statistical systems

54. The fifth workshop in the series on statistical quality management and the fundamental principles of official statistics provided training to 17 senior managers from 11 countries on the generic national quality assurance framework (NQAF) template, which had been endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-second session.[2] The sixth workshop which was scheduled to be held in October 2013, would train 22 senior managers from 11 countries on approaches for implementing NQAFs.

55. The theme of the eleventh Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific was "Positioning statistics as a development imperative: Opportunities in the context of formulating the post-2015 development agenda". To be held in Chiba, Japan, in November 2013, a planned feature of the seminar was a debate on whether statistics development should be a goal in its own right in the development agenda beyond 2015.

Customized training

56. During the reporting period, SIAP trained 140 statisticians in seven country courses based on requests from five countries (China, Myanmar,

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2011, Supplement No. 4* (E/2011/24-E/CN.3/2011/37).

Philippines, Vanuatu and Viet Nam). The trainings were conducted on a cost-sharing basis with NSOs and through funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Myanmar), UNICEF (China) and UNDP (Viet Nam). Topics covered were gender statistics, analysis of social statistics, human resource development, small-area techniques, input-output tables, census tabulation and sampling.

(b) Training resources development and coordination

57. SIAP brought together 21 statistical training managers, university officials and training institutions for the fifth workshop on forging partnerships for the coordination of statistical training in the region to discuss possible mechanisms for offering collaborative open online courses based on the Massive Open Online Course model. The aim of the courses would be to strengthen coordination in developing and conducting e-learning courses in official statistics. Organizations, such as the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Japanese Inter-university Network for Statistical Education and Statistics Indonesia, committed to developing and offering Internet-based e-learning through a common platform.

58. SIAP staff worked with a consultant to review and formulate an improved monitoring and evaluation strategy to strengthen, streamline and connect current evaluation mechanisms to ensure that all necessary data were collected at the relevant level and at the right time. The mechanisms were trainee feedback during and after training courses, external evaluations to assess specific result areas of SIAP, such as its relevance and niche, and needs assessment of client institutions to inform the work planning. The Director reported that SIAP would implement recommendations from the study, including the review of indicators used for measuring training results through feedback from trainees and their institutions and a modification of the training needs assessment tools. The Director reported that SIAP assumed responsibility as training coordinator for the Regional Action Plan and membership in its Regional Steering Committee.

59. During the reporting period, SIAP staff shared their expertise and experiences as resource persons, trainers, paper presenters and discussants at international and regional forums organized by development partners in the following areas: economic statistics and SNA; agricultural statistics; Millennium Development Goal indicators; gender statistics; sampling methods; national quality assurance frameworks; and design and delivery of statistical training courses.

(c) Implementation strategies

60. The Director reported on the resource gaps — both human and financial — encountered in implementing the programme of work for 2013, and highlighted the strategies SIAP took to address them.

61. SIAP used the results of a rapid appraisal to identify the main training needs of member States in order to prioritize the courses that were to be offered in 2013 and in selecting countries to be funded for the courses.

62. SIAP collaborated with the following statistical offices and training institutes through co-financing arrangements: Central Statistical Organisation, India; General Statistics Office, Viet Nam (one country course); National Academy of Statistical Administration; National Statistics Office, Philippines; Statistical Research and Training Center, Philippines; Statistical and Research

and Training Centre, Statistical Centre of Iran; Statistical Training Institute, Department of Statistics Malaysia; and Statistics Korea. In addition, all of the SIAP training courses benefited from expert resources provided by partners.

63. Partnerships were also strengthened by conducting training courses jointly. Courses conducted in Chiba, Japan, were organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan. The United Nations Statistics Division and SIAP jointly organized two workshops and SIAP collaborated with CAPSA on one workshop.

64. The Institute strengthened staff capacity to develop a learning management system based on a modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment, known as Moodle. SIAP used the learning management system to run blended-learning regional courses on the use of population census data to enhance the effectiveness of the training and conducted an online preparatory course for a four-month SIAP-JICA residential course organized in collaboration with Tokushima University.

65. SIAP supported demand-driven country courses by encouraging organizations to define their training objectives and outline the expected contents of the course and to co-finance the implementation of the courses, including through technical cooperation projects. Six such courses were conducted for five countries, namely China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

(d) Summary of discussion on key results and accomplishments and implementation strategies

66. Several members and associate members and regional and international organizations commended SIAP for its outstanding accomplishments and results in the reporting period and its progress in achieving the programme of work for 2013. They also expressed appreciation for the Institute's success in capacity-building in the region through its training programmes. The representative of Mongolia requested to place on record its appreciation for the Director's focused and committed leadership of SIAP, the tangible contributions of SIAP in developing the country's official statistics and the need for SIAP to continue to extend training in Japan due to its rich experience in reforming its statistical system. It urged countries to highlight at the forthcoming sessions of the Commission and the Committee on Statistics the importance of SIAP in strengthening statistical capability in their respective countries. The representative of Timor-Leste emphasized the important role of SIAP training in increasing the country's statistical capability.

67. Representatives of Malaysia, Samoa, the Statistical Centre of Iran, FAO and the United Nations Statistics Division expressed their commitment to continue to collaborate with SIAP in the delivery of training courses.

68. The representative of Australia encouraged the stretching of targets for some results, such as development of e-learning materials and a targeted number of participants. He noted that it would be more difficult to measure the performance of SIAP as it had increased its focus on building the capacity of other organizations to deliver training in addition to delivering training itself. The Council recognized the need for inputs from institutions that send participants to training courses in order to better measure the impact of training. Members encouraged SIAP to develop a system for collecting those inputs as part of its evaluation strategy.

69. The Council appreciated that SIAP achieved those targets with a small number of core professional staff through collaboration with other training institutions and efficient management of its resources. It urged further collaboration in offering training courses, implementing suitable mechanisms for certification of experts for both face-to-face and online training and setting up a database of available trainers.

70. The Council stressed that expanding the delivery of Internet-based e-learning would enable the expansion of the scope of topics and an increase in the number of course offerings, and result in training of more participants.

2. Management and administration

(a) Human resources

71. The Director reported that, as of 30 September 2013, the Institute was operating with four professional staff and three support staff. Two professional staff posts and one support staff position remained frozen as part of cost-cutting measures instituted in 2011. With support from ESCAP, SIAP staff received training on communication and writing skills, performance management, leadership development, team building, International Public Sector Accounting Standards and Moodle.

72. The Governing Council noted that SIAP had engaged the expert services of 41 resource persons from various agencies and five consultants for 13 training courses to expand its human resource base. Also, 10 officials and staff of the cooperating agency of the host Government, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, extended support services that entailed the following: coordination with government ministries for securing resource persons; arranging field visits and official ceremonies for the SIAP courses conducted in Chiba, Japan; and maintenance of training facilities and equipment at the Institute offices. In addition, the Statistics Division and subregional offices of ESCAP along with UNDP country offices provided administrative and logistical backstopping services to SIAP.

(b) Financial resources

73. The Director summarized the financial status of SIAP as of 30 September 2013, explaining that SIAP had a fund balance of $4,030,414 — calculated from total income (voluntary cash contributions of member States to SIAP plus contributions from technical cooperation projects plus interest) of $2,919,056, less expenditure of $1,367,990 plus the fund balance as of 1 January 2013 of $2,479,348.

74. Total cash contributions received from ESCAP member States in 2013, as of 30 September, amounted to $1,946,700. The Director further noted that the contribution of $1,640,700 from the host Government continued to constitute the bulk of the annual cash contributions. Cash contributions from other member and associate members of ESCAP as of 30 September totalled $306,887.

75. Income from two technical cooperation projects were $215,299 from UNFPA to undertake activities under the ESCAP/UNFPA project on "Statistical capacity-building for undertaking the 2010 round of population and housing census integrated with gender concerns" and $746,426 from FAO to undertake activities under the Regional Action Plan.

76. The Director noted that in-kind contributions, namely training facilities and supplies, costs of travel, accommodation and living expenses of participants and resource persons, and costs of staff time, accounted for a large share of programme costs. During the reporting period, the host Government, ten NSOs of ESCAP member States, eight regional and international agencies, including ESCAP divisions and subregional offices and United Nations agencies, and four universities and organizations contributed in-kind to the delivery of the work programme of SIAP. Available estimates of in-kind contributions from Australia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea totalled $1,732,386, with Japan accounting for the bulk of it.

(c) Summary of discussions on management and administration

77. The representative of Mongolia emphasized that the strong support extended by the host Government enabled the Institute to fulfil its critical role of building the capability of statistical systems in the region and requested it to continue the high level of support.

78. The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed the country's intention to increase its contribution to SIAP by 40 per cent.

79. The representative of Japan suggested that future financial reports include not just cash flows but also information, such as assets and liabilities, that would facilitate assessments of the financial status of the Institute.

4. Opportunities and challenges

80. The Director highlighted the opportunities for growth and change and the challenges presented by the programme of work. Those included the following: delivering a large number of courses and maintaining high quality results despite the Institute's small number of core staff; reliance on the expert community and the challenge of certification related to training skills; accelerating online training to match the pace of increasing participants and purposes, such as statistical literacy; improving training evaluation conducted by SIAP; and taking advantage of the opportunity to improve training evaluation in national statistical systems.

81. The Director noted the increasing importance of coordination of training activities in the region and the proactive coordinating roles taken by SIAP, such as serving as secretariat for the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific. Those roles would impose additional demands on SIAP core staff, but they would also provide resources and opportunities for hiring additional staff, realizing a system of expert affiliates and strengthening partnerships.

C. Consideration of matters relating to the programme of work of the Institute

1. Work and financial plan for 2014

82. The Governing Council had before it the document entitled "Work and financial plan of the Institute for 2014" (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/4). The Director highlighted the activities under the two main components of the work plan, (a) training programmes and courses for official statistics and (b) training resources development and coordination, and the financial plan. The Council endorsed the proposed work and financial plan and recommended that SIAP act on the suggestions made in the discussions.

(a) Training programmes and courses for official statistics

83. SIAP planned to implement about 25 training courses and workshops across seven programme areas: fundamentals of official statistics (2nd SIAP/JICA course on production of Millennium Development Goal indicators and 1st SIAP/JICA course on production and statistical analysis of indicators in support of inclusive development policies); population and social statistics (regional courses on gender statistics, vital statistics workshop series and analysis of census data); national accounts and economic statistics (basic, intermediate and advanced level regional courses series on 2008 SNA; regional course on business registers); agricultural statistics (training courses and workshops under the Regional Action Plan); environment statistics (regional course series); modernizing national statistical systems (12th Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices, 7th Workshop on Statistical Quality Management and Fundamentals of Official Statistics); and customized on-demand training (country courses, with a focus on Timor-Leste and Myanmar, collaboration with University of the South Pacific on its academic programme on official statistics).

84. The Council noted with satisfaction the increased number of e-learning courses and the blended-learning training designs. It stressed the importance of research-based training and noted its absence from the SIAP programme of work over the last two years. The Director explained that SIAP would redesign the programme with the aim of increasing cost-efficiency and producing publishable research papers.

85. The representative of FAO expressed appreciation for the strong collaboration with SIAP in improving statistical capacity and producing publications on agricultural statistics methods. He noted that the Regional Action Plan presented opportunities for continuing such collaboration, especially in training. The Council noted that the Regional Action Plan had led to the creation of governance mechanisms for reviewing and endorsing training component activities.

86. The representative of Hong Kong, China noted that developed statistical systems might wish to avail themselves of SIAP training on a self-funded basis and suggested that it routinely extend invitations to them.

(b) Training resources development and coordination

87. The Director highlighted three main areas of work under the training resources development and coordination component: developing e-learning courses through collaborative open online courses; enhancing the multiplier effect and assuring quality through a certification system of experts for statistical training and further developing skills frameworks and training needs assessment tools; and improving regional coordination, including holding the sixth workshop on forging partnerships in statistical training, creating a database on statistical training and organizing the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific.

(c) Financial plan

88. In presenting the financial plan for the proposed programme of work, the Director drew the attention of the Council to the funding gaps for training courses for which there were as yet no identified funding sources. The Director explained that the main funding gaps involved primarily travel costs and daily subsistence allowance for participants. The Council appreciated the importance of cost-sharing arrangements between SIAP and training

institutes to the financial planning of SIAP. The representative of Australia suggested that SIAP include information on the target number of participants in the plan.

2. Programme of work to formulate the 2015-2019 strategic plan: Report of the Friends of the Chair on its first meeting

89. The Governing Council had before it the report of the Friends of the Chair on its first meeting (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/5). In the report, a review of the goals, objectives and outputs of the current plan were summarized and statistical and training developments that might affect the future plan were considered. The Director presented the proposed structure of the 2015-2019 plan and the programme of work, including the consultative process for formulating it.

90. The representative of Australia expressed satisfaction with the initial proposals of FOC and encouraged the body to engage leading experts from academia and international organizations in its discussions. The representative of the Philippines emphasized the importance of addressing the statistical requirements of the development agenda beyond 2015, as well as the inclusion of a monitoring and evaluation plan for regular review and adjustments during implementation of the plan.

91. The Governing Council concurred with the above-mentioned recommendations, and endorsed the proposed guiding structure and timeline for completion of the plan. It also noted that it was essential to finalize the plan by the end of July 2014.

D. Consideration of matters relating to the Committee on Statistics

1. Regional coordination of statistical training

92. The Governing Council had before it the report on the Advisory Group on Regional Coordination of Statistical Training (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/6). It expressed support for the creation of the Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific by the Committee on Statistics, in particular the designation of the Chair of the Governing Council as a member of the Network, the designation of SIAP as secretariat of the Network and the initial focus activities of the Network.

93. Recognizing the importance of establishing a database of resource persons and regional technical cooperation initiatives in improving regional coordination, the Council expressed support for the role of SIAP in its establishment and maintenance.

2. Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

94. The Governing Council had before it the report on the Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics: Training component (E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/7).

95. The Council expressed appreciation for the effective collaboration among the implementing partners of the Regional Action Plan. The representative of Samoa emphasized the need for strong coordination between a country's ministry of agriculture and its NSO. The representative of ESCAP noted that collaboration among the implementing partners and the Regional Action Plan could be expanded to other areas of statistical

development for fundraising for SIAP activities. The Council agreed with the suggestion of the representative of FAO that including agricultural and rural statistics as a focus area in the 2015-2019 strategic plan would be a way of raising funds for the Regional Action Plan.

96. The representative of the Republic of Korea pointed to the diversity in country situations of agricultural and rural statistics and suggested that country practices be systematically disseminated.

97. The representative of the Russian Federation pointed out that the Regional Action Plan did not cover the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The representative of FAO clarified that a separate action plan covering those countries was under development.

E. Other matters

98. On behalf of Pacific island countries and territories, the representative of Samoa requested that they be granted automatic membership to the SIAP Governing Council. The Council expressed sympathy for the proposal but noted that there was no strong support to move it forward at that time.

99. The representative of Malaysia informed the Council of the country's new training institute and of its intention to collaborate with SIAP and other training institutes in the region. The representative of the Philippines informed the Council that, following the implementation of the country's new statistics law, its statistical research and training centre would be strengthened.

F. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council

100. On 19 November 2013, the Governing Council endorsed the matters calling for action or to be brought to the attention of the Commission (see chap. I). It agreed that, as Secretary of the Council, the Director of SIAP would prepare the complete report of the Governing Council on its ninth session for the seventieth session of the Commission.

III. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

101. The ninth session of the Governing Council of SIAP was held in Chiba, Japan, on 19 and 20 November 2013.

102. The representative of the Chair of the eighth session of the Governing Council, Mr. Jonathan Palmer (Australia), officially opened the ninth session.

103. An opening statement was delivered by the Director of SIAP on behalf of the Executive Secretary.

B. Attendance

104. The session was attended by representatives of the host Government (Japan) and six of the eight elected members of the Governing Council: Australia; China; Indonesia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; and Russian Federation. India and Thailand did not send representatives to the session.

105. Representatives of the following members and associate members attended the session as observers: Cambodia; Islamic Republic of Iran;

Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Timor-Leste; Viet Nam; and Hong Kong, China.

106. Representatives of the following organizations attended the session as observers: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia; United Nations Statistics Division; and Asian Development Bank.

C. Election of officers

107. The Governing Council elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chair:	Mr. Suryamin (Indonesia)
Vice-Chair:	Mr. Takao Itou (Japan)

D. Adoption of the agenda

108. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
   - (a) Opening statements;
   - (b) Election of officers;
   - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising from the eighth session of the Governing Council and its interim session.
3. Report of the Director of the Institute.
4. Consideration of matters relating to the programme of work of the Institute:
   - (a) Work and financial plan for 2014;
   - (b) Programme of work to formulate the 2015-2019 strategic plan: Report of the Friends of the Chair on its first meeting.
5. Consideration of matters relating to the Committee on Statistics:
   - (a) Report on the Advisory Group on Regional Coordination of Statistical Training;
   - (b) Report on the Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics: Training component.
6. Other matters.
7. Date and venue of the tenth session of the Governing Council.
8. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council.

B14-00318

Annex I

List of documents

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E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/4	Work and financial plan of the Institute for 2014	4a
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E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/7	Report on the Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics: Training component	5b
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(9)/INF/1	Information for participants	
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(8)/INF/2/Rev.2	Provisional list of participants	1b
E/ESCAP/SIAP/GC(8)/INF/3	Provisional schedule of the meeting	1a

Annex II

Financial statement of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for the year ended 31 December 2013
(United States dollars)

	2013	2012
Income		
Contributions	2 896 617	2 534 007
Interest income	21 506	18 842
Total income	2 918 123	2 552 849
Less: Expenditure	1 992 110	2 562 089
Net income over expenditure	926 013	(9 240)
Fund balance as at 1 January 2013	2 479 348	2 488 588
Less: Refunds to donors	-	-
Fund balance as at 31 December 2013	**3 405 361**	**2 479 348**

Annex III

Financial statement of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for the year ended 31 December 2013 by project component
(United States dollars)

	Joint contributions capacity development project - Institutional support	Asia Pacific Regional Action Plan for the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (FAO)	UNFPA	Total
Income				
Contributions	2 037 762[a]	746 426	112 429	2 896 617
Interest income	19 104	2 402	-	21 506
Total income	2 056 866	748 828	112 429	2 918 123
Less: Expenditure	1 740 321	139 360	112 429	1 992 110
Net income over expenditure	316 545	609 468	-	926 013
Fund Balance as at 1 January 2013	2 479 348	-	-	2 479 348
Less: Refunds to donors	-	-	-	-
Fund Balance as at 31 December 2013	**2 795 893**	**609 468**	**-**	**3 405 361**

[a] Please refer to annex IV for details of the contributions.

Annex IV

Cash contributions to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific for institutional support received during the year 2013
(United States dollars)

Country/Area	Year ended 31 December 2013	Year ended 31 December 2012
Australia	-	315 250[a]
Azerbaijan	-	-
Bangladesh	5 000	3 050
Bhutan	-	-
Brunei Darussalam	45 000[e]	
Cambodia	-	1 000
China	60 000	50 000
Fiji	-	16 077[b]
Hong Kong, China	30 000	30 000
India	25 000	25 000
Indonesia	30 000	30 000
Japan	1 640 700	1 652 000
Kazakhstan	5 000	5 000
Macao, China	20,000	20,000
Malaysia	20 000	20 000
Maldives	-	2 000
Mongolia	10 000	10 000
Myanmar	1 000[f]	-
Pakistan	14 862[g]	14 934[c]
Papua New Guinea	-	4 981
Philippines	-	17 500
Republic of Korea	50 000	45 153
Russian Federation	-	15 000[d]
Samoa	-	3 000
Singapore	15 000	15 000
Sri Lanka	10 000	10 000
Thailand	30 000	30 000
Timor-Leste	-	5 000
Tonga	-	1 500
Turkey	15 000	15 000
Tuvalu	1 200	-
Vanuatu	-	5 000
Vietnam	10 000	10 000
TOTAL	**2 037 762**	**2 371 445**

[a] This represented annual contributions for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

[b] This represented annual contributions for 2012 ($5,000) and 2013 ($11,077).

[c] This represented the annual contribution for 2011.

[d] This contribution was transferred from the balance of closed project 2109-RUS10007 as per a letter from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Thailand.

[e] This represented annual contributions for 2011, 2012 and 2013.

[f] This represented the annual contribution for 2010.

[g] This represented the annual contribution for 2012.

United Nations E/ESCAP/70/19

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 April 2014

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Seventieth session
Bangkok, 4-8 August 2014 (Phase II)
Item 3(i) of the provisional agenda*
Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: subregional activities for development

Report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its eighth session**

Summary

At its eighth session, the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) noted with satisfaction the outcomes of the SPECA Economic Forum entitled "Inclusive and sustainable development through regional cooperation", which was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 19 to 21 November 2013. It acknowledged the importance of strengthened regional cooperation for the full implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and expressed support for the inclusion of development priorities of SPECA countries into the development agenda beyond 2015. The Governing Council approved the Joint Statement of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum.

The Council approved the progress reports of the SPECA project working groups and noted with appreciation the work carried out by them since its last session. It expressed satisfaction with the broad scope of activities undertaken by SPECA and the stability of extrabudgetary funding received by SPECA projects. The Council adopted the SPECA Work Plan for 2014-2015 and called upon relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as the donor community to actively participate in the implementation and financing of projects contained in the work plan.

The Council noted with satisfaction the report on the work of the Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office. It encouraged further strengthening the role of the Office in project implementation within the SPECA framework.

The Council noted with satisfaction the report on cooperation between SPECA and regional organizations and institutions and supported further strengthening coordination and cooperation with partner organizations and donors in strategic areas of regional cooperation.

The Governing Council expressed its gratitude for the report on the consultations of the executive secretaries of ESCAP and ECE with the Governments of SPECA countries on the proposals on further strengthening SPECA. It approved the proposals and called upon the two regional commissions to actively support their implementation by SPECA countries.

* E/ESCAP/70/L.1/Rev.1.

** The late submission of the present document is due to the need to hold several rounds of informal consultations with ECE and the Chair of SPECA before finalizing the report.

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I. Decisions

Decision 1 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/1)

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the outcomes of the SPECA Economic Forum entitled "Inclusive and sustainable development through regional cooperation", held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 19 to 21 November 2013. It acknowledges the importance of strengthened regional cooperation for the full implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.[1] It supports the inclusion of development priorities of SPECA countries into the development agenda beyond 2015. The Council approves the Joint Statement of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum.

Decision 2 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/2)

The Governing Council approves the progress reports of the SPECA project working groups and notes with appreciation the work carried out by working groups since its last session. It expresses satisfaction with the broad scope of

[1] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex..

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activities undertaken by SPECA and the stability of extrabudgetary funding received by SPECA projects.

Decision 3 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/3)

The Governing Council adopts the SPECA Work Plan for 2014-2015 as presented by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It calls upon relevant United Nations agencies and programmes and the donor community to actively participate in the implementation and financing of projects contained in the work plan.

Decision 4 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/4)

The Governing Council approves the Terms of Reference of the Project Working Group on Trade. It expresses the hope that the terms of reference will contribute to the continued effective management and highly professional activities of the project working group.

Decision 5 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/5)

The Governing Council expresses its gratitude for the report on the consultations of the executive secretaries of ECE and ESCAP with Governments of SPECA countries on the proposals on further strengthening SPECA. It approves the proposals and calls upon the two regional commissions to actively support their implementation by SPECA countries.

Decision 6 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/6)

The Governing Council approves the Terms of Reference of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. It expresses its conviction that the terms of reference will provide a solid basis for the effective governance and implementation of the Programme.

Decision 7 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/7)

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the report on the work of the Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office and encourages further strengthening the role of the Office in project implementation within the SPECA framework.

Decision 8 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/8)

The Governing Council notes with satisfaction the report on cooperation between SPECA and regional organizations and institutions. It supports the further strengthening of coordination and cooperation with partner organizations and donors in strategic areas of regional cooperation.

Decision 9 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/9)

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for the country's active work as the Chair country of SPECA during the period 2012-2013.

Decision 10 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/10)

The Governing Council welcomes the offer by the Government of Afghanistan to assume the Chairmanship of SPECA starting 23 November 2013. It elects Afghanistan as the Chair country of SPECA for the period 2013-2014.

Decision 11 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/11)

The Governing Council takes note with appreciation the offer by the Government of Turkmenistan to assist the Government of Afghanistan in carrying out its duties as the Chair country of SPECA.

Decision 12 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/12)

The date and venue of the 2014 SPECA Economic Forum and the ninth session of the Governing Council will be decided by consultations through diplomatic channels.

Decision 13 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/13)

The Governing Council expresses its sincere gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for the excellent organization and hospitality extended to the participants of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum and the eighth session of the Governing Council of SPECA.

Decision 14 (SPECA/GC/Dec/2013/14)

The Governing Council expresses its deep appreciation to the secretariats of ECE and ESCAP and their respective executive secretaries for their efforts in organizing these important annual events and also expresses its special appreciation for their active work aimed at strengthening SPECA and for their continued support to programme implementation. The Governing Council also expresses its best wishes to the Executive Secretary of ESCAP in her transfer to another job.

II. Introduction

1. The eighth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 22 November 2013.

III. Participants

2. Representatives of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, as well as the Executive Secretary of ECE, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECE, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP and the Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia and the Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office participated in the session. Representatives of other United Nations Member States, the European Union, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations, as well as members of the academic community and the private sector also attended the session as observers.

IV. Opening of the session

3. Mr. Timur Zhaksylykov, Deputy Minister for Economy and Budget Planning of the Republic of Kazakhstan, served as Chair of the session.

4. In his opening address, the Chair emphasized the importance of the current session, which was planning to discuss the proposals on further strengthening SPECA. Those proposals had the potential to improve governance of the Programme, to streamline its working methods and to increase its effectiveness.

5. The Executive Secretary of ECE, in his opening statement, underlined that project implementation in the SPECA framework had increased several fold since the 2005 reform was introduced, but that increase in activities could not keep pace with the increase in demand. At recent Governing Council sessions, Governments of SPECA participating countries had continued to urge the two regional commissions to provide more resources for project implementation. Since ECE and ESCAP themselves were not donors, extrabudgetary resources needed to be raised through a joint effort of participating countries and the two regional commissions. A set of proposals on further strengthening SPECA was presented to the Governing Council at its seventh session, which was held in Bangkok on 28 November 2012. He explained that since then, he had paid visits to several SPECA countries, including Kazakhstan, which he went to with the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, to discuss those proposals. Overall, the reactions of top-level decision makers of those countries were positive and supportive, reconfirming the importance of the Programme.

6. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP emphasized that strengthening SPECA remained one of the most important items on the agenda. The approval of proposals aimed at strengthening SPECA by the Governing Council at its eighth session would increase the Programme's relevance, leverage its governance and ownership by participating countries and better align it with the goals of inclusive, resilient and sustainable development. He also highlighted a four-point agenda for strengthening SPECA, namely: (a) the Terms of Reference of SPECA, which would define more clearly the constitution and mandate of the Programme's different structures — the Governing Council, the Economic Forum and the project working groups — and clarify the rules pertaining to decision-making, procedures for the adoption of work plans and issuing project working group progress reports, and the election and mandate of the Chair country, as well as the role of national coordinators; (b) strengthening the Programme's work by enhancing its ownership, as up to now it had remained primarily United Nations-driven; (c) building shared interests in areas that it should play a more active role in formulating common interests, agendas and programmes of action in order to strengthen cooperation and integration among the participating countries, as well as within and between subregions; and (d) closer cooperation between SPECA and other partners, including United Nations agencies other international organizations and multilateral development institutions. He also underlined the important role SPECA could play in improving coordination of Central Asian subregional initiatives for implementation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcomes and helping member States in the formulation of the development agenda beyond 2015.

7. In their opening statements, the representatives of participating countries expressed support for the efforts of the two regional commissions to further strengthen SPECA and to involve the Programme in regional-level implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and in the preparation of the development agenda beyond 2015.

V. Adoption of the Agenda

8. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session;
2. Adoption of the agenda;

3. Outcomes of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum "Inclusive and sustainable development through regional cooperation";

4. SPECA activities since the last session of the Governing Council;

5. Adoption of the SPECA Work Plan for 2014-2015;

6. Approval of the Terms of Reference of the Project Working Group on Trade;

7. Briefing on consultations of the Executive Secretaries of ECE and ESCAP in the capital of SPECA countries on the "Proposal on further strengthening SPECA", presented to the 7th session of the Governing Council;

8. Report of the work of the Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office since the last session of the Governing Council;

9. Cooperation between SPECA and regional organizations and institutions;

10. Election of the next Chair (country) of SPECA;

11. Other business, including date and venue of the 2014 SPECA Economic Forum and 9th session of the SPECA Governing Council;

12. Adoption of conclusions and decisions;

13. Closing of the session.

VI. Outcomes of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum "Inclusive and sustainable development through regional cooperation"

9. The Chair introduced the Joint Statement of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum. Representatives of the SPECA countries noted with satisfaction the outcomes of the Economic Forum and acknowledged the importance of strengthening regional cooperation for full implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

VII. SPECA activities since the last session of the Governing Council

10. The Deputy SPECA Coordinator at ECE informed participants on the activities of the SPECA project working groups since the last session of the Governing Council. While emphasizing the impressive results and stability of project implementation in the SPECA framework, he pointed out that a further increase in the number of projects and resources for project implementation would require additional efforts by the Governments of participating countries and the two regional commissions to raise more extrabudgetary resources.

VIII. Adoption of the SPECA Work Plan for 2014-2015

11. The Deputy Head of the Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office introduced the draft work plan for 2014-2015.

12. During the discussions, one representative raised objections to projects implemented within the SPECA framework that did not cover all seven of the SPECA participating countries. He proposed that in the future, each SPECA project should cover all participating countries. The majority of delegates of the SPECA countries supported continuation of the existing practice of

including in the work plan projects that cover only part of the SPECA region, namely projects involving fewer than all seven participating countries. It was pointed out that certain challenges, such as the environmental catastrophe resulting from the shrinkage of the Aral Sea, did not directly affect all seven SPECA countries. Thus, there was no reason not to include projects addressing such challenges in the work plan as they addressed the needs of several participating countries and their solution required regional cooperation.

13. There were no objectives by the members of the Governing Council to the adoption of the SPECA Work Plan for 2014-2015.

IX. Approval of the Terms of Reference of the Project Working Group on Trade

14. The Director of the ECE Economic Cooperation, Trade and Land Management Division introduced the draft terms of reference of the Project Working Group on Trade.

15. There were no objections by members of the Governing Council to the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the Project Working Group on Trade.

X. Briefing on consultations of the Executive Secretaries of ECE and ESCAP in the capitals of SPECA countries on the "Proposals on further strengthening SPECA"

16. The Executive Secretary of ECE reported on the consultations with the Government of Kazakhstan, held jointly with the Executive Secretary of ESCAP in Kazakhstan, and his official visits to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to discuss the proposals on further strengthening SPECA. In Bishkek, he met with Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldyev. In Dushanbe, he was received by President Emomali Rahmon and in Ashgabat by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. He also met and conducted more detailed discussions with the ministers of foreign affairs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

17. During those consultations, the high-level leaders and decision makers underlined the importance of SPECA and its role in strengthening regional cooperation. They supported the main direction of the proposals, namely more active participation by the Governments of SPECA countries in managing the Programme, which should be more responsive to the needs of the participating countries and include more projects to be implemented in the areas of regional cooperation that could have the greatest impact.

18. After concluding the first round of visits, the Executive Secretary underlined that the proposals on further strengthening SPECA were in line with the needs and suggestions expressed by his counterparts during those consultations. He was of the view that that their adoption and implementation could significantly enhance the effectiveness of the Programme.

19. He summarized the main areas of SPECA that would be strengthened by the proposals, as follows:

(a) The adoption of the Terms of Reference of SPECA would clearly define the composition and mandate of various bodies under the Programme, including rules of decision-making and the role of SPECA national coordinators. Thus, 15 years after its creation, SPECA would be able to operate on the basis of agreed and clearly defined rules;

(b) By encouraging participating countries to provide both financial and in-kind support, such as conference facilities and interpretation to SPECA activities, the proposals would strengthen those countries' ownership of the Programme;

(c) The more active role of SPECA countries in project development and implementation would guarantee that projects implemented in the SPECA framework properly reflected the needs and demands of participating countries. It would also facilitate fundraising by convincing donors that SPECA projects were truly demand-driven.

20. Recent consultations in capital cities of SPECA member countries had convincingly demonstrated the importance of regular high-level contacts between the Governments of the SPECA participating countries and the senior management of the two regional commissions tasked with supporting the Programme, as well as with other United Nations agencies. Such consultations, on the one hand, provided authoritative guidance to the regional commissions on the needs of SPECA countries and, on the other hand, offered an opportunity to further bolster the political will for strengthening regional cooperation.

21. The Governing Council adopted the proposals on further strengthening SPECA and the Terms of Reference of SPECA

XI. Report on the work of the Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office since the last session of the Governing Council

22. The Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia and the Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office reported on the activities of the Office since the seventh session of the Governing Council, which was held in Bangkok on 28 November 2012.

23. He stated that the Office had led the preparation of the 2012 SPECA Economic Forum, which was held in Bangkok on 27 and 28 November, and the seventh session of the Governing Council of SPECA and had provided active support to events organized by SPECA in 2013. In addition, throughout 2013, the Office had extended support to meetings of the SPECA project working groups on transport and border crossing, trade, water and energy resources and knowledge-based development.

24. Apart from SPECA, the Office's main activities in 2013 focused on strengthening inclusive and sustainable development, building resilience with regard to the environment, technology and climate change, water management and energy sources, and connectivity in the areas of trade, transport and information and communications technology. Among the activities were the following: a high-level panel at the VI Astana Economic Forum, Astana, 22-24 May; Youth Forum on the Implementation of Rio+20, Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 18-21 August; the High-level Policy Dialogue "Macroeconomic Policies for Sustainable and Resilient Growth in North and Central Asia", Almaty, Kazakhstan, 27-28 August; national consultations in Kazakhstan on the development agenda beyond 2015; the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 27-30 May; subregional seminars on energy and water in North and Central Asia; and the Final Regional Review of the Almaty Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing countries, Vientiane, 5-7 March.

25. He also informed the delegates about some of Office's project activities, including the project entitled "Strengthening cooperation for Disaster Risk Reduction in North and Central Asia", which was implemented in 2013,

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the ongoing project entitled "Strengthening Economic Ties between Afghanistan and Central Asia" and a new project on safety assessment of small dams in Central Asia.

XII. Cooperation between SPECA and regional organizations and institutions

26. The Executive Secretary of ECE delivered a report on cooperation between SPECA and other regional organizations since the seventh session of the Governing Council.

27. He underlined that adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want" provided strong momentum to ongoing cooperation among ECE, ESCAP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The latter was playing an important role in the implementation of the outcomes. At the same time, in the outcome document, important tasks had been assigned to the regional commissions, in particular in efforts to invigorate regional cooperation. ECE and UNEP were jointly supporting efforts to strengthen the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, which was tasked with playing a central role in the implementation of outcomes at the regional level. In the light of the outcome of discussions during the high-level segment of the 2013 SPECA Economic Forum on regional aspects of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the development agenda beyond 2015, cooperation among ECE, ESCAP and UNEP was expected to remain intensive and close.

28. SPECA, through its various project working groups, worked closely with a large number of partners and donors, including the Czech Republic, the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Finland, Germany, Israel, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as with the Asian Development Bank, the Eurasian Development Bank, the Eurasian Economic Commission, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the International Trade Centre, the International Labour Organization, the Islamic Development Bank, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

29. ECE continued to work closely with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), one of the most important Central Asian regional organizations. Following the rotation of the Chairmanship from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan, a new work programme was being discussed and agreed upon. It focused on supporting implementation of the Third Aral Sea Basin Programme through intensive donor coordination, further institutional and legal strengthening of IFAS, capacity-building on international water law and dam safety. Work with the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia was likely to receive new momentum with the possible continuation of work on water quality.

XIII. Election of the next Chair (country) of SPECA

30. The Governing Council elected Afghanistan as the Chair country of SPECA for the period 2013-2014.

XIV. Other business, including the date and venue of the 2014 SPECA Economic Forum and the 9th session of the SPECA Governing Council

31. Participants took note of the statement by the representative of Afghanistan that the date and venue of the 2014 SPECA Economic Forum and the ninth session of the SPECA Governing Council would be communicated to the Governments of participating countries through diplomatic channels.

XV. Adoption of conclusions and decisions

32. The Governing Council adopted 14 decisions. In accordance with the established practice, the decisions would enter into force, if no objection is received, within 30 days.

XVI. Closing of the session

33. The Chair closed the eighth session of the Governing Council of SPECA.

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Item 4(a) of the provisional agenda*
Management issues: report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013

Report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present report contains a summary of the main findings and recommendations of key evaluations and evaluative reviews undertaken by the secretariat during the biennium 2012-2013 and the steps taken by ESCAP to implement those recommendations.

Pursuant to resolution 67/14 on cooperation between the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and other United Nations and regional and subregional organizations serving Asia and the Pacific, the present report also provides an overview of existing arrangements in which the secretariat coordinates its work with regional and subregional organizations operating in the region and a description of the functioning, decision-making and results of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism.

The Commission may wish to use the information contained in the report to guide the direction and focus of the future work of ESCAP.

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I. Introduction

1. Through evaluation, ESCAP seeks to generate evidence-based information about the results of its work. On this basis, the secretariat undertakes efforts to foster institutional learning aimed, first of all, at improving the quality of its delivery and, secondly, at strengthening its accountability to the member States. Through resolution 66/15 on the strengthening of the evaluation function of the secretariat of the Commission, the Commission underscored the importance of reinforcing the evaluation function at ESCAP and requested the Executive Secretary to ensure that the secretariat's programmatic work, including the work of divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions, is evaluated periodically.

2. The present report contains a summary of the main findings and recommendations of key evaluations conducted in 2012 and in 2013, including the steps taken by the ESCAP secretariat to implement those recommendations. It also includes details of the secretariat's efforts to strengthen the evaluation function, including through capacity-building, quality assurance and networking. Furthermore and pursuant to resolution 67/14 on cooperation between the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and other United Nations and regional and subregional organizations serving Asia and the Pacific, the present report provides an overview of the existing arrangements in which the secretariat coordinates its work with those organizations and a description of the functioning, decision-making and results of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism.

3. During the biennium 2012-2013 and in line with the ESCAP evaluation plan, the secretariat commissioned two evaluations and seven evaluative reviews[1] (see the annex for more details). The ESCAP evaluation plan is prepared each biennium in conjunction with the ESCAP biennial programme budget. Additionally, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) initiated an external evaluation of ESCAP in 2013 following a Secretariat-wide risk assessment exercise undertaken by the Office to identify potential programme evaluation priorities. Altogether, three regional commissions, namely ESCAP, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, were on the OIOS evaluation workplan for the biennium 2013-2014. The evaluation focused on the following: research and analytical work of ESCAP; publications; and the roles and responsibilities of

[1] Evaluative processes at ESCAP are categorized into "evaluations" and "evaluative reviews", according to their management arrangements. For further details, see the ESCAP evaluation guidelines, available at www.unescap.org/partners/monitoring-and-evaluation/evaluation.

subregional offices and divisions, with particular emphasis on the research and analytical function. Stakeholders were consulted extensively as a matter of priority throughout the process. The methodology drew on quantitative performance data, a publication and an analytical product utility assessment, OIOS surveys targeted at ESCAP stakeholders and staff, and a document review. The data was collected through field missions, video teleconferences, focus groups and interviews.

II. Key recommendations from ESCAP evaluations and reviews implemented during the biennium 2012-2013 and related actions taken by the secretariat

4. At the thematic and subprogramme level, the secretariat commissioned three evaluative exercises: an evaluation of the conference structure of the Commission; an evaluation of the subprogramme on Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction; and an evaluative review of the ESCAP Pacific Office (EPO). The evaluations were aimed at assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the conference structure and subprogrammes in delivering their programmes of work, and at ascertaining the comparative advantages of ESCAP and the value it adds to the work of other relevant international and regional organizations. All of the evaluations were undertaken by independent evaluation consultants and followed the norms and standards for evaluation developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

5. The evaluation of the conference structure of the Commission was finalized in 2013. The key findings showed that 80 per cent of member States saw the Commission as fulfilling its mandate. At the same time, the member States were of the view that a greater thematic focus was required to balance the cross-cutting needs of countries and the sectoral structure of the Commission and the secretariat. The importance of remaining relevant, engaging a varied set of stakeholders and further addressing the needs of more vulnerable countries was reinforced. The evaluation also found that resolutions are recognized as the main outcome of the Commission session, and highlighted the challenges associated with resolutions, such as delayed submission and lack of clarity of the outcomes. Some of the key recommendations included: (a) reducing the duration of the Commission session from seven days to five days; (b) choosing an overarching theme for each session; (c) merging the theme study with the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*; and (d) expanding the special body coverage to include least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Pacific island countries every year. At its sixty-ninth session, the Commission reviewed the conference structure on the basis of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. The Commission subsequently adopted resolution 69/1 on a conference structure of the Commission for the inclusive and sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific. In the resolution, it decided to implement many of the evaluation recommendations and also requested the Executive Secretary to conduct further study and analysis on some of the proposals. Among them were the following: (a) constituting a new committee on energy; (b) converting the Committee on Information and Communications Technology into a committee on technology; (c) reforming the governance structure of the regional institutions and their integration within the secretariat's programme of work; (d) strengthening the effectiveness of the resolutions adopted by the Commission, including indications of measurable outcomes and reporting modalities for the actions to be undertaken by member States and the secretariat; (e) convening the eight committees biennially, with

four committees meeting each year for a maximum duration of three working days and devoting a half of a day or one day to joint plenary sessions between multiple committees, if required, with the Commission having the right to mandate a specific committee or multiple committees to meet in the gap year in situations in which a particular topic becomes an urgent issue to the region; and (f) having the secretariat's subregional offices organize preparatory meetings prior to Commission sessions on the theme of those sessions at the subregional level, with a view to enlisting participation of representatives from civil society and the private sector to provide inputs into the theme study. Since the sixty-ninth session, the secretariat has conducted studies and analyses of the proposals mentioned above through various modalities, including periodic consultations with member States through the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission and an informal working group of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of resolution 69/1. Significant progress has been made with regard to proposals (a), (b), (d) and (e). The secretariat will continue to consult member States in the period between the seventieth and seventy-first Commission sessions on the proposals, with a view to preparing for the seventy-first session a comprehensive report on their programmatic, organizational and budgetary implications.

6. The evaluation of the subprogramme on Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction was finalized in March 2012. The findings showed that the subprogramme's work was generally regarded as highly relevant to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the aims of the Hyogo Framework for Action,[2] although there had been greater emphasis on technical rather than on socioeconomic aspects, and that its most effective interventions were the well-timed reactions to disaster situations where the catalytic role of ESCAP had produced multiplier effects. The findings suggested that the mainstreaming of socioeconomic issues, such as those related to gender and disability, might merit closer attention. The subprogramme was found to make efficient use of its allocated resources. Among the recommendations from the evaluation were, as follows: (a) strengthen results-based orientation and reporting; (b) increase collaboration and coordination between substantive divisions and offices, and with external organizations, including other United Nations entities; (c) ensure greater mainstreaming of gender; and (d) focus on the comparative strengths and advantages of ESCAP. In response to the recommendations, the secretariat has undertaken a number of follow-up actions. In regard to the first recommendation, it has implemented a stronger monitoring and evaluation framework during the programme/project planning stage. In regard to the second recommendation, the secretariat (a) applied a "One UN" approach in implementing the third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, (b) worked closely with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other partners, while leading the preparations for the technical session and high-level round table on public-private partnership for disaster risk reduction for the sixth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, (c) engaged in ongoing discussions on broadening the partnership in preparing the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report*, and (d) sought public-private partnerships, particularly in the field of information and communications technology (ICT), within the existing United Nations rules and regulations. In regard to the third recommendation, it has promoted making available data on disasters and their impacts on disadvantaged groups and core ICT indicators for development, disaggregated by gender. In regard to the fourth recommendation, the secretariat (a) strengthened the socioeconomic analysis for delivering analytical

[2] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

products that provide evidence-based policy analysis, including the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012* and the theme study on *Building Resilience to Natural Disasters and Major Economic Crises*, (b) promoted regional connectivity as a way to better address the digital divide and associated socioeconomic consequences and (c) analysed the socioeconomic benefits of ICT and space applications with regard to disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

7. The evaluative review of the ESCAP Pacific Office (EPO) was undertaken to ascertain how the office can be strengthened to better serve the needs of Pacific island members and associate members. The evaluative exercise was completed in 2011, with the management response being finalized in June 2012. The review found that EPO is critical to the relevance of ESCAP in the subregion as it has established some core areas of work that play an important role in meeting the needs of Pacific island members and associate members. The recommendations included clarifying the core function of EPO, including the respective roles, responsibilities and authority of substantive divisions and EPO, and for the secretariat to document it as a management circular/instruction. As a result, one main area of follow-up centred on increasing collaboration and coordination among the substantive divisions and offices through the initiation of joint annual planning meetings by videoconference and setting and formalizing the roles and responsibilities between subregional offices and individual substantive divisions. In November 2012, as a direct result of this evaluative review, the Executive Secretary issued the framework on the working relations between ESCAP substantive divisions and subregional offices. Some further follow-up actions were the following: developing a communication and publications plan for EPO; publishing an annual report for external stakeholders; continuing to work with external partners on gender equality and the empowerment of women; mainstreaming gender equality principles into the work of EPO; and enhancing support extended to the subregion for the application of these principles.

8. An evaluative review of the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal, 1986-2010*, was conducted with the overall aim to assess the value of the journal for its intended audience as a decision-making tool for policy formulation and advocacy activities. The review focused on developing concrete recommendations to improve the contribution of the journal to meet the specific needs of its key target audiences and to identify ways to make the preparation, publication and dissemination of the journal more effective and sustainable. The review noted that the respondents highly rated the overall quality of the journal, and that its contents serve as an important source of information for the exchange of knowledge on all aspects pertaining to population, reproductive health and gender issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Several recommendations focused on the need to balance contents to make the journal as useful to practitioners as it is to academics. Among them were: reconstituting the Editorial Advisory Board of the journal; ensuring that the articles are reviewed by a sufficient number of reputed external reviewers; and giving priority to policy-oriented articles. Another key focus of the recommendations was to improve some operational and technical aspects related to the online accessibility of the journal, the online submission of articles and the maintenance of the mailing list. The secretariat has implemented most of these recommendations.

9. During the biennium 2012-2013, ESCAP led evaluative reviews of five projects funded through the United Nations Development Account (see the annex for more details). Another five project reviews were postponed due to the extension of the project duration. The United Nations Development

Account is a capacity development programme of the United Nations Secretariat, which is aimed at enhancing the capacities of developing countries in areas of priority. The projects concerned were implemented by the relevant ESCAP division or office, working in close collaboration with a range of partners, including, among others, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme and other regional commissions. These reviews made systematic assessments of the key results and outcomes of the projects and derived lessons learned in order to formulate recommendations for follow-up projects and actions to improve future project implementation. A few common observations and recommendations have emerged from these reviews, as follows:

(a) First, that the communication and dissemination of project-related products and resources need to be enhanced and supported by information and knowledge-management policies and the appropriate tools;

(b) Secondly, strong partnerships and clarity on the various roles of the partnering organizations remain essential for the success and sustainability of project interventions.

III. Strengthening evaluation at ESCAP

10. On the basis of resolution 66/15, the secretariat continues to strengthen the evaluation function at ESCAP. In 2012, a dedicated evaluation unit was established under the Programme Planning and Partnerships Division. The unit ensures that ESCAP evaluations are managed in an effective and timely manner, conducted in accordance with the ESCAP Evaluation Guidelines[3] and the standards and principles developed by UNEG and used in an effective manner for accountability and organizational learning. The unit is also responsible for improving the capacity of ESCAP staff to plan, manage and implement evaluations.

11. Building evaluation awareness and capacity among ESCAP staff is one of the overarching aims of the evaluation function at ESCAP. A workshop on evaluation in the ESCAP context was offered to ESCAP staff in September 2013. The workshop specifically focused on Development Account evaluations, given that they constitute a substantial percentage of the evaluation activities undertaken at ESCAP. This was the first of a series of evaluation workshops that will continue to be offered throughout the present biennium. These workshops are being complemented by internal evaluation briefings and support extended to subregional offices and regional institutes, as well as by an annual regional evaluation workshop conducted by the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP), within which ESCAP is a very active participant.

12. The ESCAP evaluation unit offers quality assurance and technical support to colleagues who commission and manage evaluations at the working level. It has developed various tools to support staff in planning and carrying out evaluations. These include the following: (a) a variety of templates and other forms of guidance for assessing evaluability, setting up reference groups and reviewing terms of reference and evaluation reports; (b) a video entitled "Evaluation at ESCAP", which introduces the evaluation process for project managers; (c) a roster of evaluation consultants; (d) an online survey administration and analysis tool; (e) guidance notes on developing survey

[3] Available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/EvaluationGuidelinesOct09Pub.pdf.

questionnaires; (f) sample survey questionnaires from across ESCAP; and (g) a reference note on indicators and measurements at ESCAP.

13. Work on enhancing the use of evaluation results is ongoing. The ESCAP Evaluation Tracker, an information technology tool for improving the use of information generated from ESCAP evaluations, is being upgraded to make it more user-friendly, and improve the options available and add new ones. The improved tool will help the secretariat be more efficient and effective in tracking and using evaluations, and will ultimately contribute to further strengthening external and internal accountability for achieving development results. In addition, the first few of a series of evaluation briefs, which contain summaries of the findings and follow-up actions of previous evaluations, have been made available to staff.

14. The ESCAP evaluation function benefits from a broad network of evaluation professionals globally, and in the region. The evaluation unit co-chaired UNEDAP in 2013, and is a member of UNEG, as well as part of the Development Account Evaluation Task Force. ESCAP initiated the development of a monitoring and evaluation network, which links the focal points for evaluation of the five regional commissions. The aim of this network is to share resources and experiences in monitoring and evaluation and to incorporate monitoring and evaluation norms and standards developed by the Department of Management, UNEG and OIOS. ESCAP currently serves as the secretariat of the network.

15. ESCAP is scheduled to host the annual meeting of UNEG, which is scheduled to be held in Bangkok from 31 March to 4 April 2014. This would be the first time that this meeting and associated evaluation workshops would have been held in the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP is grateful for this rare opportunity to enhance its visibility before the global United Nations family and to promote the evaluation culture before ESCAP staff. The overall theme of the meeting is "Strengthening the quality and use of evaluations at the national and regional levels and ensuring accountability to the people we serve". The first two days of the meeting are scheduled to be dedicated to an evaluation practice exchange, which is to feature a high-level panel discussion on the importance of evaluation to guide decision-making and ensure accountability among senior officials from governments and their development partners, including the United Nations, in the context of the development agenda beyond 2015. The Annual General Meeting of UNEG is scheduled to be held during the three remaining days of the meeting.

16. Along with the secretariat's ongoing pursuit of good practice in mainstreaming gender into the programme management cycle, the UNEG guidance documents covering the integration of gender equality into evaluation are being promoted among staff members for use in carrying out evaluative activities.

IV. Coordination mechanisms with regional and subregional organizations

17. Pursuant to Commission resolution 67/14, the following summary provides an overview of the manner in which the secretariat carries out its mandate and coordinates its work with regional and subregional organizations operating in Asia and the Pacific, and describes the functioning, decision-making and results of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, including how the secretariat leverages synergies and other efficiencies that could serve as a model for coordination.

A. Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism

18. The Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism continued to provide the primary vehicle for strengthening policy coherence within the United Nations system and promoting cooperation and collaboration among United Nations entities and their development partners in addressing regional development issues.

19. The Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, convened and serviced by the ESCAP secretariat, has a membership of 31 United Nations and affiliated entities, including, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank. Currently, seven thematic working groups operate as subsidiary bodies of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, namely Education for all; Environment and disaster risk management; Gender equality and empowerment of women; Health; International migration, including human trafficking; Poverty and hunger; and Youth (a joint group of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and UNDG Asia-Pacific)

20. As the report on the key achievements of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism in 2012 was provided in the document E/ESCAP/69/17, the present report focuses mainly on the achievements in 2013.

21. The Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism organized seven meetings in 2013, including a working session chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General at the side of the sixty-ninth session of the Commission and a meeting on the ASEAN-United Nations Comprehensive Partnership. Much of the work of the Regional Coordination Mechanism was focused on articulating the regional perspectives of the United Nations system as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development process and inputs into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 processes, as well as on the priorities and unfinished business under the Millennium Development Goals, with a strong focus on poverty.

22. Some of the key highlights of the work of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, including through its thematic working groups, in 2013 include: (a) publication of the *Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda: Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13*;[4] (b) preparation of the road map for Millennium Development Goal 1 on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, which promoted the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative in Asia and the Pacific, and six briefs on success stories in fighting poverty and hunger in Asia and the Pacific; (c) issuance of a joint agency report entitled "Towards a green economy for sustainable development and poverty reduction: An Asia-Pacific perspective";[5] (d) implementation of a "One UN" approach in the holding of the third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction in which the Thematic Working Group on Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction actively participated in the preparation and the conduct of the meeting; (e) the convening of the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in Bangkok from 29 to 31 May; (f) the planning of United Nations youth activities in the region to contribute to

[4] ESCAP, ADB and UNDP, *Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda: Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13* (September 2013).

[5] *Towards a green economy for sustainable development and poverty reduction: An Asia-Pacific perspective*. (United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism). Available from http://issuu.com/mayanitamojado/docs/asia-pacific_perspective.

the more effective delivery of youth-related programmes and projects; (g) development of an interagency strategy for the improvement of gender statistics in Asia and the Pacific; and (h) the convening of the thirteenth Regional Meeting of National Education for All Coordinators: The Big Push.

23. UNDG Asia-Pacific complements the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism as it serves as another vehicle for ESCAP to coordinate and interact with other entities in the United Nations system. It focuses on the "Delivering as one" process at the country level. The secretariat actively engages in the work of the UNDG Asia-Pacific, including through selective involvement in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes.

24. Progress was made in strengthening collaboration between the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and UNDG Asia-Pacific through a joint initiative to support collaboration in formulating Asia-Pacific perspectives in two main areas: the means of implementation of the development agenda beyond 2015; and a global partnership to support it. The initiative largely builds on the Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific region on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015[6] and the *Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda: Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13*.[4] As part of this initiative, a joint Regional Coordination Mechanism-UNDG Asia-Pacific expert panel discussion entitled "Implementing the global development agenda: Asia-Pacific perspectives on partnerships and means" was a side event at the sixth session of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which was held in New York from 9 to 13 December 2013.

B. Formal arrangements with United Nations and international agency counterparts

25. Coordination and collaboration among ESCAP and the United Nations and other international agency counterparts is underpinned through a series of memorandums of understanding (MoUs). Signed by ESCAP at the level of the Executive Secretary, these MoUs typically set out priority areas for cooperation and arrangements for working together. In 2013, ESCAP signed an MoU between the regional commissions and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Under this agreement, FAO has provided significant support to the work of ESCAP on agricultural statistics.

26. During the period 2012-2013, annual formal consultations were held with ADB and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The agendas for these consultations included, among other things, a review of progress in the implementation of previous joint commitments, a review of lessons learned and experiences and the identification of key priorities for the next 12 months. The chairing and convening of these meetings alternated between ESCAP and the respective agencies, and decision-making was by consensus.

27. Annual formal consultations were held in July 2012 and June 2013 with ADB and in November with ILO. Another consultation with ILO is scheduled to be held in the second quarter of 2014. The main areas of consultation with ADB are helping countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals, water, environment, climate change, statistics, social protection and regional

[6] Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific region on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015 (27 August 2013). Available from apmd2013.unescap.org/documents/APMD2013_Declaration.pdf.

connectivity, while with ILO, they are social protection, statistics, macroeconomic and labour market policies, green economy and green jobs, and youth employment and entrepreneurship.

28. The secretariat continued to work with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in supporting the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). Its engagement in this effort was mainly centred on organizing the annual meetings of the SPECA Governing Council, which were held in Bangkok on 28 November 2012 and in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 22 November 2013, the SPECA Economic Forums, which were held in Bangkok on 27 and 28 November 2012 and in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 19 to 21 November 2013. The secretariat contributed to the work of the project working groups that covered areas in which ESCAP has strong expertise and in general a comparative advantage, namely trade, transport, and water and energy resources.

C. Relations with regional and subregional bodies

29. ESCAP continued to work closely with regional and subregional organizations that serve the region in pursuit of its mandate to build regional consensus on shared priorities and common solutions for common problems, and to provide a regional hub for sharing development knowledge and good practice across Asia and the Pacific. In this context, ESCAP works with a range of regional and subregional partners, including under formal cooperation agreements.

30. During the biennium 2012-2013, under existing agreements, ESCAP continued to work with ADB, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). During the same period, ESCAP signed new or renewed cooperation agreements with the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Eurasian Development Bank, the Greater Tumen Initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In addition, ESCAP signed a trilateral agreement in 2013 with ECE and the Secretariat of the Integration Committee of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC).

31. In close collaboration with other United Nations regional organizations under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, the secretariat coordinated a review of the ASEAN-United Nations Comprehensive Partnership, in particular through the inputs to the economic and social cultural pillars. In this context, the Executive Secretary participated in the ASEAN-United Nations Summit, which was held in Bandar Seri Begawan on 11 October 2013. The Summit agreed to proceed with developing a strategic road map for implementing the partnership during the period 2014-2015. The secretariat's partnership with ASEAN is in the areas of regional connectivity (including transport, trade facilitation and information and communications technology), disaster risk reduction and social development.

V. Conclusion

32. As outlined in the present report, evaluation and evaluative reviews undertaken during the biennium 2012-2013 continued to provide evidence-based information on the performance and relevance of ESCAP operations at the subprogramme and project levels. The information facilitated performance enhancement and guided organization-wide changes at ESCAP, particularly regarding its conference structure. Key follow-up actions to evaluation recommendations are being implemented with a view to strengthening results-

based orientation and reporting, increasing collaboration and cooperation internally among substantive units of ESCAP and externally with other regional and subregional organizations, clarifying the function of the secretariat's subregional offices vis-à-vis substantive divisions and mainstreaming socioeconomic issues, such as gender and disability, into its work programme. As part of the evaluation process, the Executive Secretary signs a document containing an evaluation management response and follow-up actions for each evaluation conducted by ESCAP. The secretariat has also put in place an internal system for tracking the progress of those actions. Both of these practices reinforce the accountability of the ESCAP management in implementing follow-up actions.

33. Additionally, the secretariat will continue to document and assess the manner in which it carries out its mandate and coordinates its work with regional and subregional organizations operating in Asia and the Pacific, and with other United Nations and international organization counterparts in the context of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism. In the case of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, information on its activities and joint work carried out by ESCAP members and associate members will be maintained on its website, which is part of the ESCAP website.

34. The experience described above indicates the value of formalized frameworks for coordination and collaboration, including MoUs with key partners, that can enhance transparency and accountability through processes of regular joint review and planning based on agreed commitments and processes for working together. Also highlighted is the importance of ensuring that work with stakeholders is well coordinated and operations complement each other in aspects pertaining to work planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It is considered that the secretariat has made important progress in these directions in recent years, as described above.

Annex

Evaluations and evaluative reviews implemented by ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013

Title	Category of evaluation[a]	Type of evaluation	Year completed
Evaluation of the Conference Structure of the Commission of ESCAP	Evaluation	Strategic	2013
Evaluation of the ESCAP Subprogramme on Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction[b]	Evaluation	Subprogramme	2012
Evaluative Review of the ESCAP Pacific Office[b]	Evaluative review	Subprogramme	2011[c]
Evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal, 1986-2010[b]	Evaluative review	Project	2013
Development Account Project: Strengthening Capacity in Mitigating the Impact of the Financial Crisis and Sustaining Dynamic and Inclusive Development in Asia and the Pacific	Evaluative review	Project	Review ongoing
Development Account Project: Strengthening Social Protection	Evaluative review	Project	Review ongoing
Development Account Project: Capacity-building of Pacific Small Island Developing States to Incorporate the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation into National Sustainable Development Strategies	Evaluative review	Project	2012
Development Account Project: Enhancing Trade Competitiveness of Least Developed Countries, Countries in Transition and Transit Countries through the Implementation of Single Window Facilities	Evaluative review	Project	2012
Development Account Project: Supporting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)–based Development Strategies through Integrated Regional Action	Evaluative review	Project	2012

[a] Evaluative processes at ESCAP are categorized into "evaluations" and "evaluative reviews", according to their management arrangements. See the ESCAP *Evaluation Guidelines*, available at www.unescap.org/partners/monitoring-and-evaluation/evaluation, for further details.

[b] Results of this evaluations had been reported to the Commission at its sixty-eighth session in May 2012.

[c] Management response and follow-up action plan completed in 2012.